

**PHYSICAL THERAPY BOARD OF CALIFORNIA**

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INTERNET <http://www.ptb.ca.gov>**PHYSICAL THERAPISTS and PHYSICAL THERAPIST ASSISTANTS
RECEIVING AND DOCUMENTING VERBAL ORDERS FROM A PHYSICIAN**

Can physical therapists and physical therapist assistants receive and document verbal orders from a physician?

The inquiry regarding physical therapists receiving and documenting verbal orders from a physician was reviewed by the Practice Issues Committee (Committee) of the Physical Therapy Board of California at their meeting on August 8, 2002

A physical therapist's license does not preclude them from performing a function that does not require a license. Considering this, the Committee concluded that in this situation a physical therapist would be acting as a layperson, someone not licensed (e.g. receptionist, clerical staff, janitor, etc.), and could receive and document verbal orders from a physician. However, the ability of the layperson to receive and document verbal orders would be dependent on policy and procedures established by the facility.

A similar inquiry regarding whether or not a physical therapist assistant could receive and document telephone orders from a physician regarding a physical therapy patient was presented to the Practice Issues Committee at their meeting on February 26, 1998. In response to that inquiry the Committee opined that a physical therapist assistant can take telephone orders from a physician providing the physical therapist assistant documents the orders in the patient record, does not alter the treatment plan and apprizes the supervising physical therapist of the orders

Adopted by the Practice Issues Committee on August 8, 2002

Note: This document is not a declaratory opinion of the Physical Therapy Board California.